

REMARKS

Based on the election with traverse of Species I, claims 5, 6, 10, 15, 18, and 19 are hereby withdrawn without prejudice.

Claims 1–4, 7–9, 11–14, 16–17 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Kaplenski et al. in U.S. Patent No. 6,746,037. Claims 1–4, 7–9, 11–14, 16–17 and 20 are hereby canceled without prejudice.

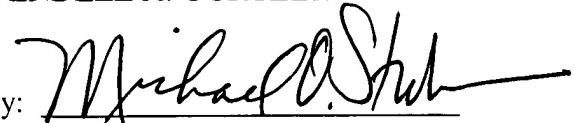
Claims 21–44 have been added to more completely claim the subject matter of the instant invention. New claims 21–44 recite a bumper-pull type trailer hitch comprising a plurality of base frame members, operatively attached to the towing vehicle and disposing of the gas-filled apparatus under the towing vehicle. Kaplenski et al. disclose bumper-pull type hitches to be inserted into an existing hitch receiver. Hence, the air bag resides behind, not beneath, the towing vehicle. Additionally, Kaplenski et al. do not disclose a plurality of base frame members, operatively attached to the towing vehicle.

The instant invention provides a clear advantage over that of Kaplenski et al. Because the entire hitch assembly, except the hitch ball and the member to which the hitch ball is directly connected, resides under the vehicle, the instant bumper-pull type trailer hitch is more compact than that of Kaplenski et al. There are evident structural advantages as well.

Accordingly, because all remaining claims 21–44 are believed to be clearly allowable, a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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